

Gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction among Mexican immigrant couples: A latent profile approach

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Abstract:

Informed by socioecological and dyadic approaches to understanding marriage, the current study examined the patterning of gender-typed attributes among 120 Mexican immigrant opposite sex couples and the subsequent links with spouses' reports of marital satisfaction. Latent profile analysis (LPA) was used to identify typologies of couples based on spouses' self-reported masculine and feminine attributes. Three couple profiles were identified: (a) *Androgynous Couples*, (b) *Undifferentiated Couples*, and (c) *Mismatched Couples*. Results from a mixed model ANCOVA showed profile differences in couples' marital satisfaction based on profile membership, suggesting that spouses in the Undifferentiated Profile were the least satisfied. Findings illustrate a lack of gender-typing at the individual and couple levels that challenge stereotypical and patriarchal depictions of Latino marital relationships and propose a more complex understanding of Mexican-origin spouses' gender-typed attributes than has yet been portrayed in the literature. The finding that couples with 1 androgynous partner (i.e., wives in the Mismatched Profile) reported similar levels of marital satisfaction to couples in the Androgynous Profile offers additional insights regarding how these qualities operate under the unique socioecological niches that Mexican immigrant couples inhabit—contexts that may place demands on spouses that challenge gendered and culturally bound depictions of marriage.

Keywords: gender-typed attributes | marital satisfaction | pattern analytic approach | Mexican immigrants

Article:

The association between personality and marital satisfaction has long been of interest to relationship researchers. During the 1970s, Bem (1974, 1977) and others laid the foundation for new directions in the study of personality and marital satisfaction by focusing attention on potentially gendered dimensions of personality. Arguing that masculinity and femininity were two separate dimensions rather than opposite ends of a single dimension, Bem (1977) described four classifications of individuals based on their gender-typed attributes. Masculine-typed individuals reported higher levels of masculinity and lower levels of femininity, whereas feminine-typed individuals reported higher levels of femininity and lower levels of masculinity.

Androgynous individuals reported relatively higher levels (scores above the median) of both femininity and masculinity, whereas undifferentiated individuals reported relatively lower levels (scores below the median) of both masculinity and femininity. Building in part on Bem's formulation, several competing hypotheses have been advanced concerning the association between spouses' gender-typed attributes and marital quality. They are the similarity, complementarity, androgyny, instrumental, and expressive hypotheses.

What do each of these hypotheses postulate? The similarity hypothesis suggests that couples who are more similar in gender—typed attributes (i.e., masculinity and femininity) will experience higher levels of marital quality and adjustment than less similar couples (see Gaunt, 2006). The complementary hypothesis proposes a conventional view of marriage in that husbands and wives who possess complementary rather than similar gender-typed attributes (e.g., masculine husbands married to feminine wives) are believed to experience optimal marital quality. The androgyny hypothesis posits that couples in which both spouses are high on masculine and feminine attributes will experience comparatively higher levels of marital quality than other couples. This hypothesis postulates that androgynous individuals are able to draw from the strengths of both masculine and feminine capacities, and are less constrained and more flexible in their social interactions—including marriage (Bem, 1974; Helms, Proulx, Klute, McHale, & Crouter, 2006). The instrumental hypothesis suggests that marital quality is dependent on the extent to which partners possess stereotypically masculine qualities like assertiveness, self-sufficiency, and independence (e.g., Bradbury, Campbell, & Fincham, 1995). In contrast to the instrumental hypothesis, the expressive hypothesis posits that marital satisfaction and quality depends on the extent to which both partners possess stereotypically feminine qualities (e.g., sensitivity, understanding, and compassion). In intimate (vs. nonintimate) relationships, partner's femininity, or the extent to which partners are emotionally supportive and responsive, is argued to be key in predicting relationship satisfaction (Ickes, 1985). As has been summarized elsewhere (Helms et al., 2006), research exists in support of each of these hypotheses. Results have been mixed, albeit the androgyny and expressivity hypotheses have received the greatest empirical support and the complementarity perspective the least.

Although there is a relatively large body of research addressing the associations between spouses' gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction, this work is limited in its reliance on primarily variable-oriented approaches applied to predominantly White, middle-class samples of married individuals or college student dating partners. Whereas the theoretical underpinnings of this literature align with contemporary pattern analytic and dyadic approaches to the study of relationships, with very few exceptions (e.g., Helms et al., 2006), many of the empirical studies that exist are characterized by dated statistical techniques and less than optimal methodological approaches for studying couples. Because of these limitations, most prior studies failed to fully explore the variety of ways in which husbands and wives gender-typed attributes may be configured within couples and how such configurations might be linked to both spouses' marital satisfaction. Furthermore, an overreliance on relatively homogeneous samples limits the generalizability of existing research beyond the White and middle class (Antill, 1983; Bradbury et al., 1995; Helms et al., 2006; Zammichieli, Gilroy, & Sherman, 1988). Indeed, the lack of research on the links between spouses' personal attributes and marital satisfaction among non-White and/or immigrant couples is problematic given the unique socioecological niches these

couples often inhabit—contexts that place demands on spouses that are often gendered and culturally bound (Helms, 2013; Helms et al., 2011).

The current study sought to extend the literature through an examination of the within-couple patterning of Mexican immigrant husbands' and wives' gender-typed attributes and their association with both spouses' reports of marital satisfaction. This research expands on prior work by heeding suggestions raised by contemporary scholars who advocate for the application of dyadic and pattern-analytic approaches as preferable over earlier variable-centered, individual approaches to more fully capture the inherent complexities in spouses' gender-typed attributes and their links to marital satisfaction (Helms et al., 2011; Laursen & Hoff, 2006; O'Brien, 2005; Whiteman & Loken, 2006). Furthermore, this study will be the first to examine this association within a sample of Mexican immigrant couples and will provide a test of earlier theoretical assertions about the gendered nature of marital relationships among couples of Mexican origin (Clark, 1959; Lewis, 1961; Madsen, 1973; Rubel, 1966).

Because theoretical assumptions about Mexican-origin spouses as gender-typed have been criticized as superficial (e.g., Cromwell & Ruiz, 1979; Mirandé, 1997), an exploratory methodological approach that allows for the possibility of within-group variation in spouses' gendered personality attributes is warranted. The use of latent profile analysis (LPA) with dyadic marital data allows for the possibility of both within- and between-couple variation in Mexican immigrant spouses' gender-typed attributes and their links with husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction. The exploratory nature of LPA prohibits any a priori assumptions regarding the gendered nature of marital relationships for Mexican immigrants. In summary, through the application of a dyadic and pattern-analytic approach to the examination of gender-typed attributes among Mexican immigrant couples, findings from this study will provide: (a) a nuanced depiction of Mexican immigrant spouses' gender-typed attributes within couples via the identification of couple profiles based on husbands' and wives' self-reported attributes, and (b) an examination of the association between the identified couple profiles and husbands' and wives' reports of marital satisfaction.

Gendered-Typed Attributes and Couples of Mexican Origin

Scholars have theorized and written about gender-typed attributes and their implications for marriage among Latinos for decades. Early depictions of Latin American and specifically Mexican families were often based on impressionistic and ethnographic accounts from cultural outsiders whose depictions portrayed highly gender-typed marital relationships with extremely masculinized and dominant husbands and feminized and submissive wives (Clark, 1959; Jones, 1948; Lewis, 1961; Madsen, 1973; Peñalosa, 1968; Rubel, 1966; Stevens, 1973). However, the stereotypic, gendered portrayal of Mexican men and women, often referred to as “machismo” for men or “marianismo” for women, has been challenged in the limited empirical literature that exists (Cromwell & Ruiz, 1979; Torres, Solberg, & Carlstrom, 2002; Vazquez-Nuttall, Romero-Garcia, & De Leon, 1987). Mirandé (1997, p. 66) noted that “when applied to Mexicans or Latinos, ‘machismo’ remains imbued with such negative attributes as male dominance, patriarchy, authoritarianism, and spousal abuse,” whereas when referring to the Anglo culture the same term is more typically a connotation of virility, masculinity, and sex appeal. In contrast to this narrow view of masculinity, Mirandé (1997) argued that feminine attributes such as

emotionality and sensitivity were actually more acceptable for men in Latino cultures compared to Anglo cultural norms. Mirandé further noted that an inadequate understanding of the nuances of the language and culture on the part of early ethnographers resulted in misrepresentations about the gendered nature of Latino families. Despite these contrasting views, studies have failed to empirically test either the actual patterning of Mexican couples' gender-typed attributes or the links between the pattern of gender-typed attributes and spouses' marital satisfaction.

The links between gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction may be especially salient for Mexican couples in the context of immigration. Not only is it possible that the process of immigration selects couples with specific attributes, stressors because of immigration may require spouses to pull from personal resources to adapt to life in a new environment (Boneva & Frieze, 2001; Helms et al., 2011). For example, masculine attributes, such as willingness to take risks, and assertiveness, may shape migration decisions, and may be a particularly salient resource for successful adaptation to life in the United States for both husbands and wives. Furthermore, studies have failed to highlight the possibility of within-group diversity in gender-typed attributes among Mexican couples. Ortiz (1995) noted that the singular portrayal of Mexican marital relationships serves to convolute the heterogeneous reality of family life.

The proposed study capitalizes on the possibility of within-group diversity among Mexican immigrant couples through the use of a pattern-analytic, dyadic approach to empirically examine the link between spouses' gender-typed attributes and their marital satisfaction. The goals of the study are twofold. First, this study uses LPA to classify Mexican-origin, immigrant couples based on husbands' and wives' self-reported gender-typed attributes (i.e., wives' femininity, wives' masculinity, husbands' femininity, and husbands' masculinity). Utilizing spouses' continuous scores within a pattern-analytic approach to data analysis allows for the identification of types of couples with similarly organized patterns of gender-typed attributes. This approach provides an empirical test of the best-fitting typology that represents the dyadic patterns across the gender-typed attributes to capture within-group heterogeneity in spouses' gender-typed attributes among Mexican immigrant couples. Second, this study examines the association between the identified couple typologies and husbands' and wives' reports of marital satisfaction. Although the literature provides the most support for the role of expressivity and androgyny in predicting spouses' marital satisfaction, hypothesis testing is premature given that this is the first study to examine the links between gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction for Mexican-origin couples, as well as the first study to incorporate LPA to elucidate couple typologies based on spouses' gender-typed attributes. These analyses provide an opportunity to expand current findings regarding the links between gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction that were limited in scope because of the nature of their samples and methods. Examining these links in an understudied population about whom much has been theorized regarding the gendered nature of their relationships provides a first empirical test of the patterning of gender-typed attributes and the subsequent links with marital satisfaction among couples of Mexican origin.

Because depressive symptoms have been consistently found to be associated negatively with marital satisfaction (e.g., Karney & Bradbury, 1995), spouses' self-reported depressive symptoms were treated as control variables in the analyses linking couple profiles to spouses' reports of marital satisfaction. Mexican immigrant couples are likely to vary in their legal marital

status because of legal status as well as cultural norms regarding marital versus nonmarital permanent unions (Oropesa & Landale, 2004; Phillips & Sweeney, 2005). Variations in marital satisfaction and well-being by legal marital status have been documented (Helms et al., 2014; Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986) and support the inclusion of marital status (i.e., legally married vs. living as married) as a control variable in the substantive analyses. Although spouses' length of residence in the United States (viewed as a proxy for acculturation in other studies) may impact relational and personal well-being outcomes, in the current study, spouses' marital satisfaction was not correlated with length of residence for either partner and was not included as a control.

In summary, the research linking gender-typed attributes with marital satisfaction has been mixed. The sampling and methodological limitations of previous work have limited current understanding regarding the variety of patterns of gender-typed attributes in non-White and immigrant couples as well as their potential links with marital satisfaction. The current study constitutes an advancement in that it utilizes a sample of Mexican-origin immigrant couples to examine the link between spouses' gender-typed attitudes and their marital satisfaction. Furthermore, the pattern analytic approach utilized in this study allows for the identification of couple profiles based on spouses' self-reported continuous gender-typed attribute scores rather than imposing prescribed parameters for group membership on the sample. This is especially important given the stereotypic gender-typed nature often ascribed to couples of Mexican origin. With the exception of the Helms et al. (2006) study of a predominantly White (98%), middle-class United States sample, no study has taken a pattern-analytic approach to examine the links between couples' gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction. Through the use of LPA, the current study hopes to better align the examination of the links between spouses' gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction with the dyadic underpinnings of the underlying theoretical literature in a manner that allows for the possibility of within-group heterogeneity.

Method

Participants

Data were collected during 2007 and 2008 as part of a larger study of marital relationships among Mexican immigrant parents living in the United States during the early child rearing years. The sample was comprised of 120 first-generation, Mexican immigrant opposite sex couples with young children living in North Carolina. To be eligible for inclusion in the study, participants needed to be married or living as married, have biological children living in the household, and have at least one member of the couple be of Mexican origin and have both spouses be of Latin American origin. All husbands in the sample were from Mexico, with the majority (i.e., 89%) married to wives who were also of Mexican origin. Because of issues with legal status and cultural norms regarding the recognition of nonmarital unions as "married," couples who were not legally married but were "living as married" were eligible for participation; 83 (69%) of the couples were legally married and 37 (31%) of the couples were living as married, for 7 years of "marriage" on average. Mean ages for husbands and wives were 30.33 ($SD = 5.79$) and 28.13 ($SD = 5.46$), respectively, and couples had an average of two children with firstborn children averaging 5.87 ($SD = 3.88$) years of age. Ninety-eight percent of husbands were employed and had an average of 9.01 years of education ($SD = 3.18$), whereas

54% of wives were employed and averaged 9.66 ($SD = 3.17$) years of education. Average annual family income was \$33,297 ($SD = \$12,725$). Husbands had been residing in the United States for 11.40 years on average ($SD = 5.26$), and wives averaged 8.81 years of residence ($SD = 4.41$). Participating couples lived in small towns (55%), cities (26%), and in rural areas (19%). Ninety-five percent of couples lived in neighborhoods characterized by high poverty (i.e., neighborhood poverty rate of 19% to 32% based on population data). A majority (49%) of the couples resided in neighborhoods classified by the U.S. Bureau of the Census as 50% Hispanic, 29% lived in neighborhoods ranging from 10–25% Hispanic, and 21% of couples resided in neighborhoods characterized by a less than 10% Hispanic composition.

Procedure

Participants were recruited with the assistance of cultural insiders and snowball sampling methods within predetermined census tract locations identified by their relatively high concentrations of Latino family households. Latina project staff, social service workers, and community contacts made initial contacts with families either in families' homes or at social service agencies that served the Latino community. During these initial contacts, families were informed of the goals of the research study, the nature of the interview, and eligibility criteria. Interested couples received a flyer with the project's contact information. With the exception of one couple that withdrew before their interview, all couples that expressed interest in participation and met eligibility criteria were interviewed. Interviews lasting 2 to 3 hours were conducted in participants' homes by bilingual, Latina project staff. Consent forms and measures were available in both Spanish and English; all but one couple were interviewed in Spanish. Questionnaires were presented orally to compensate for variations in literacy, and husbands and wives were interviewed separately. Couples were compensated with \$50 gift cards.

Measures

All measures were previously validated in, or specifically adapted for use with, samples of Mexican-origin individuals. Measures were further verified as appropriate for use by Spanish translators associated with the Center for New North Carolinians familiar with the local Mexican immigrant population and dialect. All measures demonstrated good reliability in the current sample. See Table 1 for Cronbach's α s reported separately for husbands and wives.

Gender-typed attributes. Bem's (1974) BEM Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), used in prior work with Latino populations (Kranau, Green, & Valencia-Weber, 1982; Kulis, Marsiglia, & Nagoshi, 2010), assessed husbands' and wives' masculine and feminine gender-typed attributes. The masculinity (e.g., ambitious, assertive) and femininity (e.g., compassionate, sensitive) subscales, each with 20 items, were completed by each spouse via a card sort procedure. Participants used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*never or almost never true*) to 7 (*always or almost always true*) to rate how well the gender-typed attribute described their personality. Mean scores were created for the femininity and masculinity subscales; higher scores indicated higher levels of the attribute.

Marital satisfaction. An adapted 16-item version of Huston, McHale, and Crouter's (1986) Domains of Marital Satisfaction scale assessed spouse's satisfaction with their marriage

across a variety of domains (e.g., marital communication, decision-making) including culturally relevant dimensions of marital satisfaction that were added for use with Mexican American couples (e.g., satisfaction with spouse’s support of Mexican traditions; Wheeler et al., 2010). Participants were asked to think about the past and use a scale that ranged from 1 (*extremely dissatisfied*) to 9 (*extremely satisfied*) when responding. Scores were averaged across the 16 items; higher scores indicated greater levels of marital satisfaction. Multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) conducted with the current sample confirmed that the 16 items represented a single underlying construct for both husbands and wives (Helms et al., 2014).

Control variables. Marital status was dichotomously coded as either legally married or “living as married” based on wives’ reports. Spouses’ depressive symptoms were assessed via a 9-item version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Helms et al., 2014; Radloff, 1977) in which respondents rated their feelings over the past month regarding indicators of depressive symptoms (e.g., “I felt depressed”) using a scale of 1 (*rarely or none of the time*) to 4 (*most of the time*). Higher scores indicated higher levels of depressive symptoms.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations Among the Study Variables

Study Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Wives’ marital status ^a	—								
2. Wives’ depressive symptoms	-.18 [†]	—							
3. Husbands’ depressive symptoms	.02	.10	—						
4. Wives’ femininity	.07	-.04	-.03	—					
5. Wives’ masculinity	-.14	-.05	-.01	.51 ^{***}	—				
6. Husbands’ femininity	-.16 [†]	.04	-.05	-.01	.01	—			
7. Husbands’ masculinity	-.01	.10	-.01	.09	.09	.14 ^{***}	—		
8. Wives’ marital satisfaction	.23 [*]	-.37 ^{***}	.00	.29 ^{**}	.17 [†]	.01	-.05	—	
9. Husbands’ marital satisfaction	.06	-.11	-.07	.14	.03	.34 ^{***}	.05	.21 [*]	—
<i>M</i>	.69	14.25	14.28	5.15	4.48	4.78	5.04	7.20	7.57
<i>SD</i>	.46	4.20	3.95	.61	.79	.60	.70	1.33	.96
α	—	.81	.76	.73	.81	.74	.80	.94	.90

^a Coded as 0 = not legally married (consensual union), 1 = legally married.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Results

Preliminary Findings

Table 1 provides the bivariate correlations, means and *SDs* for all of the study variables. Wives’ femininity was associated positively with their reports of masculinity ($r = .51, p < .01$). This was also the case for husbands ($r = .47, p < .01$). Both husbands’ and wives’ femininity was positively associated with their own reports of marital satisfaction ($r = .34, p < .01, r = .29, p < .001$, for husbands and wives, respectively); however, masculinity was not correlated with marital satisfaction for either husbands or wives and no significant bivariate associations were found linking spouses’ own gender-typed attributes to their partners’ reported marital satisfaction. Husbands’ and wives’ marital satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated ($r = .21, p < .05$). Whereas wives’ depressive symptoms were associated negatively with their reports of marital satisfaction ($r = -.37, p < .01$), husbands’ depressive symptoms were not significantly associated with their reports of marital satisfaction ($r = .07, ns$). Marital status was associated with wives’ (but not husbands’) reports of marital satisfaction ($r = .23, p < .05$).

Wives in couples who were legally married reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than wives in consensual unions.

Couple Profile Identification and Description

The first goal of the study was to identify patterns of couples' gender-typed personal qualities based on husbands' and wives' masculine and feminine scores. A latent profile analysis (LPA) was conducted with Mplus version 6.0 to distinguish couple profiles utilizing husbands' and wives' self-reported masculine and feminine personal quality continuous scores. LPA aligns with the person-centered and dyadic theoretical underpinnings of the study and is a variation of latent class analysis (LCA) in that the indicator variables are continuous as opposed to categorical. An advantage of LPA over other analytic grouping strategies is that LPA provides a statistical test of model fit (e.g., Lanza, Bray, & Collins, 2013). Model fit statistics used to select the appropriate number of profiles include the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC; Akaike, 1987), the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC; Schwarz, 1978) and the Parametric Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test (BLRT). In general, lower AIC and BIC values signify a better model fit, and the bootstrapped estimates provide a statistical test for whether the addition of a latent profile improves the overall model fit. The BLRT was chosen over the Vuong–Lo–Mendell–Rubin Likelihood Ratio Test (VLMRT; e.g., Tein, Coxe, & Cham, 2013) as in the context of the significant bootstrapped test, the nonsignificant VLMRT is immaterial (Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthén, 2007). Entropy denotes the accuracy of classification into each profile based on the manifest indicators and can also be used to determine the appropriate number of profiles. Entropy scores greater than .60 but less than .80 are considered moderate, whereas scores greater than .80 are viewed as high. Higher entropy values denote higher classification accuracy, with the maximum being 1. In addition to the examination of model fit statistics, the current study also followed recommendations to consider theoretical justifications and applicability of the latent typology solutions, latent typology separation (distinguishability of profiles using manifest indicators), homogeneity of latent typologies, and model interpretability (e.g., relative size and meaningfulness of latent typologies) to determine the optimal number of couple profiles (e.g., Lanza et al., 2013). In summary, to determine the optimal number of couple profiles the following criteria were considered: (a) model fit statistics (e.g., AIC, BIC, Entropy, and BLRT), (b) model interpretability and homogeneity, and (c) typology separation.

Two-typology, 3-typology, and 4-typology solutions were examined for the current LPA; the 3-typology solution was deemed to fit the data best (see Table 2 for model fit statistics). The AIC decreased from the 2-typology solution to the 4-typology, and the BIC increased from the 2-typology solution to the 4-typology solution. In addition, the BLRT suggested that a 4-typology model did not fit significantly better. When comparing the remaining 2- and 3-typology solutions, the significant BLRT indicated that the 3-typology solution fit the data better than the 2-typology solution ($p = .03$). Entropy was notably higher in the 2- versus 3-typology solution; however, typology separation, homogeneity of latent typologies, and model interpretability increased when examining a 3-typology versus 2-typology solution.

In summary, the LPA results offered the most compelling support for a 3-typology solution representing conceptually distinct typologies of couples based on partners' gender-typed attributes (see Figure 1). For Profile 1 ($n = 45$), *Androgynous Couples*, both husbands' and

wives' scores were relatively high for their sex on both femininity ($Mdn = 4.75, 5.28$, respectively) and masculinity ($Mdn = 5.10, 4.60$, respectively) and represented 37% of couples in the sample. Profile 2 ($n = 20$), *Undifferentiated Couples*, represented 17% of couples in which both husbands and wives scored low on both femininity and masculinity. The third and largest of the three profiles represented approximately 46% of the couples ($n = 55$) and consisted of *Mismatched Couples* with wives who scored high on both femininity and masculinity married to husbands who scored low on both femininity and masculinity. On average, spouses in the Androgynous Profile scored higher than those in the Undifferentiated and Mismatched couple profiles across masculine and feminine dimensions and spouses in the Undifferentiated Profile scored the lowest. At the couple level, spouses in the Androgynous and Undifferentiated Profiles were more similar to each other than spouses in the Mismatched Profile. At the individual level, wives in the Androgynous and Mismatched Profiles did not differ and scored higher on masculinity and femininity than the wives in the Undifferentiated Profile. Husbands in the Androgynous Profile scored higher on both masculinity *and* femininity than husbands in both the Mismatched and Undifferentiated Profiles.

Table 2. Model Fit Statistics and Latent Profile Enumeration

	2 profile solution	3 profile solution	4 profile solution
Information criteria			
Akaike (AIC)	959.24	950.99	949.42
Bayesian (BIC)	995.48	1001.16	1013.53
Sample-size adjusted BIC (ABIC)	954.38	944.25	940.81
($n^* = (n + 2) / 24$)			
Entropy	.77	.61	.72
Sample size			
Couple profile 1	23	45	32
Couple profile 2	97	20	61
Couple profile 3	—	55	23
Couple profile 4	—	—	4
BLRT			
	1 vs. 2 profiles	2 vs. 3 profiles	3 vs. 4 profiles
H0 loglikelihood value	-488.03	-466.62	-457.49
2 Times the loglikelihood difference	42.82	18.25	11.57
Difference in the number of parameters	5	5	5
Approximate p -value	.00	.03	.50
Successful bootstrap draws	10	100	6

Linking Couple Profiles With Marital Satisfaction

The second goal of the current study was to examine the relationship between the patterning of couples' gender-typed attributes and their reports of marital satisfaction. The link between the couple profiles and spouses' marital satisfaction was tested using a 3 (profile) \times 2 (spouse) mixed model analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Marital status and husbands' and wives' depressive symptoms were treated as covariates, and spouse was treated as a within-groups factor. Mixed model analysis of variance (ANOVA) is often used by researchers analyzing dyadic data because dyad membership can be treated as a repeated measure, thus, accounting for the nonindependence of the data (Bray, Maxwell, & Cole, 1995; Maguire, 1999). Because cell sizes were unequal, Type 3 sums of squares were examined. Significant findings were followed up with post hoc Tukey's tests. The omnibus between-subjects test for the latent profiles was significant, $F(2, 118) = 3.48, p < .05$, and indicated spouses' marital satisfaction differed based

on couple profile membership (means by couple profile membership are reported in the last three columns of Table 3). Tukey's tests indicated that couples in the Undifferentiated Profile reported significantly lower levels of marital satisfaction than couples in either the Androgynous or Mismatched Profiles ($d = .72$ and $.73$, respectively). Androgynous and Mismatched couples did not differ in their reports of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, the interaction between spouse and typology was nonsignificant underscoring that the within-couple patterning of spouses' marital satisfaction scores did not differ by profile membership.

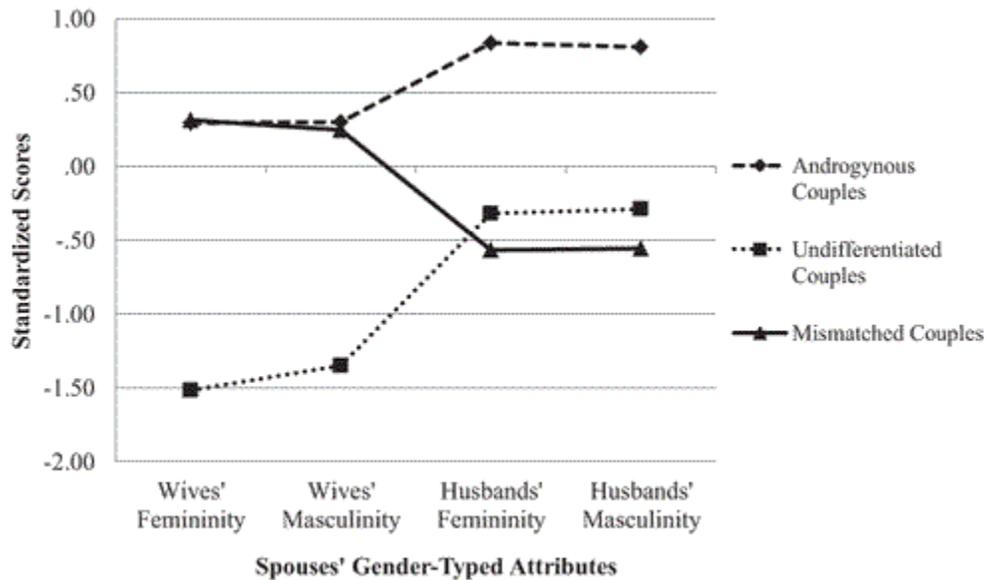


Figure 1. Latent couple profiles of spouses' gender-typed attributes (masculinity and femininity).

Table 3. Spouses Gender-Typed Attributes and Marital Satisfaction by Latent Typology Membership

Couple typology	N	Wives'	Wives'	Husbands'	Husbands'	Wives'	Husbands'	Marital
		femininity	masculinity	femininity	masculinity	marital	marital	satisfaction
		M (SD)	(couple) ^a					
Androgynous couples (AC)	45	5.33 (0.48)	4.72 (0.59)	5.28 (0.41)	5.61 (0.46)	7.22 (1.36)	7.76 (0.87)	7.49 (0.90) ₁
Undifferentiated couples (UC)	20	4.23 (0.46)	3.42 (0.68)	4.59 (0.54)	4.83 (0.64)	6.49 (1.26)	7.22 (1.16)	6.86 (1.00) ₂
Mismatched couples (MC)	55	5.34 (0.42)	4.68 (0.65)	4.44 (0.46)	4.64 (0.58)	7.45 (1.27)	7.54 (0.93)	7.5 (0.80) ₁

^a Tukey test differences for the couple typology between subjects effect indicated that Marital Satisfaction was significantly lower of UC couples compared with AC and MC. The subscripts denote a statistical difference between UC couples (2) and MC and AC couples (1).

Discussion

Guided by a pattern-analytic and dyadic approach, the goals of this study were to (a) identify latent profiles of Mexican immigrant couples based on their gender-typed attributes using LPA, and (b) examine the links between couple profiles and marital satisfaction. Three profiles were identified and were found to be linked with spouses' self-reported marital satisfaction. Scholars (e.g., Ortiz, 1995) have suggested that the heterogeneous reality of Mexican families has been

obscured by their singular, and gendered, portrayal in the literature. Through the use of a pattern-analytic and dyadic approach, results from the current study further support this critique of the literature and underscore within-group diversity in Mexican immigrant spouses' gender-typed attributes by revealing three distinct groups of couples. In the following sections, we will discuss the profiles, their links with marital satisfaction, the strengths and limitations of the current study, and potential implications for research and practice.

Couple Profiles and Marital Satisfaction

Early reports of Mexican-origin couples portrayed gender-typed relationships characterized by highly masculinized men, and highly feminized women. These characterizations were termed *machismo* for men and *marianismo* for women. Scholars have since challenged these stereotypical conceptualizations of Mexican-origin individuals and couples (e.g., Cromwell & Ruiz, 1979; Torres et al., 2002; Vazquez-Nuttall et al., 1987). The current study, however, is one of the first studies to provide a dyadic and pattern-analytic empirical test of previous assertions about the gender-typed nature of Mexican-origin couples. A 3-typology profile solution fit the data best based on model fit statistics and interpretability. Profile 1 (Androgynous Couples) was characterized by husbands and wives who reported relatively high levels of both masculinity and femininity, whereas Profile 2 (Undifferentiated Couples) was characterized by husbands and wives who reported relatively low levels of both masculinity and femininity. The third and most prevalent group, Profile 3 (Mismatched Couples), was characterized by husbands who reported relatively low levels of both masculinity and femininity partnered with wives who reported relatively high levels of both masculinity and femininity. Notably, the results from the LPA demonstrated no evidence of gender-typing at the individual or couple levels. These findings highlight the heterogeneity as well as lack of gender-typing in the patterning of gender-typed attributes in Mexican immigrant couples, and contrasts the often one-dimensional and highly gender-typed portrayal of Mexican-origin men and women.

A previous pattern-analytic study with a middle-class, White sample also found evidence of undifferentiated and androgynous couples; however, there were two clusters of gender-typed couples and no evidence of mismatched couples (Helms et al., 2006). Another study by Davidson and Sollie (1987) found evidence for similarity in partners' gender-typed attributes with androgynous and undifferentiated husbands more frequently partnered with androgynous and undifferentiated wives, respectively. However, unlike the findings from the current study with Mismatched Couples being the most prevalent, Davidson and Sollie (1987) found dissimilar couples to be the least prevalent. In their article, Boneva and Frieze (2001) describe the concept of a migrant personality, arguing that selection effects might elucidate personality differences between individuals who choose to migrate and those who do not. Although the authors do not discuss gendered dimensions of personality, similar processes may be operating in the current sample of Mexican immigrants. One potential reason there are no gender-typed couples in the current sample may be that immigration from Mexico may have selected for individuals and couples who are not gender-typed. Selection effects may operate by dictating which couples choose not to migrate (i.e., gender-typed) rather than selecting for those couples who do. Comparative research designs have been used in work examining variation in gendered behavior patterns between Mexican women who migrate and those who do not (e.g., Parrado & Flippen, 2005), finding that migration does not uniformly predict changes in gendered behavior. Future

research that includes samples of couples in Mexico may be able to provide a test of whether specific gender-typed patterns of couples are selected for by the process of migration.

The second goal of this study was to link the latent typologies of couple profiles with spouses' reports of marital satisfaction. By using a pattern-analytic approach to create typologies of Mexican immigrant couples, a more nuanced depiction of spouses' gender-typed attributes and their marital satisfaction was demonstrated. Consistent with previous work (e.g., Helms et al., 2006) couples in the Androgynous Profile reported relatively higher levels of marital satisfaction and couples in the Undifferentiated Profile reported relatively lower levels of marital satisfaction. In contrast with Antill's (1983) study finding that "the presence of one androgynous partner is not associated with greater happiness of the couple" (p. 150), the Mismatched Couples in the current study that included androgynous wives married to undifferentiated husbands, reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than the couples in the Undifferentiated Profile, and were not significantly different than the couples Androgynous Profile. For couples in the Mismatched Profile, the presence of an androgynous wife may be protective for both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction.

Links With Empirical and Theoretical Literature

Highlighting both a strength and potential limitation of the pattern-analytic LPA, the current study organized couples based on existing patterns in the data that did not necessarily conform to previous work using variable-centered approaches. The couple profiles identified through the pattern-analytic approach in this study did not map well on to existing theoretical frameworks. Whereas couples in the Androgynous Profile tended to conform to the previous empirical and theoretical literature, the theoretical literature is somewhat limited in explaining the undifferentiated and androgynous-undifferentiated couple patterns found. Based on the couple profiles identified, the current study was able to examine the propositions postulated by the similarity and androgyny hypotheses, providing additional insight into the links between gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction under different cultural and economic contexts than has been previously studied.

The similarity hypothesis proposed that partners who are similar in their gender-typed attributes are more likely to be satisfied than couples who are more dissimilar. More recent research supports the notion that similarity in gender-typed attributes is protective for evaluations of the marriage (e.g., Helms et al., 2006) as well as linked with positive reports of marital functioning (e.g., Gaunt, 2006), whereas other earlier studies have found that marital satisfaction did not differ among couples who were similar and dissimilar in gender-typed attributes (Juni & Grimm, 1994). Two profiles (Androgynous and Undifferentiated Couples) consisted of partners who reported similar levels of masculinity and femininity, and one profile (Mismatched Couples) consisted of couples with wives who reported high levels of masculinity and femininity and husbands who reported low levels. There were no significant differences found between couples' marital satisfaction in the Androgynous Profile and in the Mismatched Profile, yet the couples in the Undifferentiated Profile reported significantly lower levels of marital satisfaction than couples in the other two profiles. In terms of similarity, the partners within the Androgynous and Undifferentiated Profiles were more similar to each other, with a greater disparity between husbands' and wives' gender-typed attributes in the Mismatched Profile. The results from the

current study do not support similarity in gender-typed attributes as a necessary precursor to marital satisfaction.

Findings from the current study do offer partial support for the androgyny hypothesis that suggests that the most satisfied couples are comprised of individuals who are androgynous. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Davidson & Sollie, 1987; Helms et al., 2006; Zammichieli et al., 1988) couples in the Androgynous Profile reported higher levels of marital satisfaction compared with couples in the Undifferentiated Profile. However, couples in the Androgynous Profile were not more satisfied than the couples in the Mismatched Profile in which only one partner, specifically wives, were androgynous. Davidson and Sollie (1987) noted that undifferentiated couples “may be lacking in the skills most necessary to handle the many situational demands of an intimate relationship such as marriage” (p. 67). The current results seem to suggest that similarity in gender-typed attributes may not be as important as having an androgynous partner and perhaps an androgynous wife specifically.

It is possible that there is not one best configuration for promoting marital satisfaction, and several configurations of couples may promote positive marriages. Although the theoretical literature tends to generalize the links between gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction across all contexts, it is possible that various configurations of couples’ gender-typed attributes may be more or less adaptive in particular environmental or cultural contexts. It has been suggested that androgynous individuals are more flexible and adaptive because they are less constrained by gender-typed responses to social situations. Accordingly, it may be that androgynous wives are protective for couples’ reports of marital satisfaction as these wives may be better able to draw from both instrumental and expressive capabilities to bring up, discuss, and successfully resolve marital concerns (e.g., Erickson, 2005). This may be especially salient in the context of an emerging immigrant community where previously available structural and familial supports are less accessible. Helms et al. (2011) noted that the macrosocietal context, such as immigration patterns and affiliated family processes, can either “facilitate or inhibit individual development and marital functioning” (p. 72). Researchers have often noted that one of the commonalities among migrants is the experience of stress. Bush, Bohon, and Kim (2005) noted that “an immigrant family’s system will experience stress to the extent that the members find particular strategies they have used in the past to accomplish family tasks are not as effective in the social, economic, and political contexts of the United States” (p. 310). Masculine attributes, such as willingness to take risks and assertiveness, may shape migration decisions, and may be particularly important for personal strength and successful adaptation to life in the United States for both husbands and wives, whereas feminine attributes may support spouses’ relationship maintenance behaviors. Therefore, it may be that having at least one androgynous spouse may attenuate stress due to of immigration and serve as a buffer for marital satisfaction.

Given this finding, androgyny may be tentatively viewed as adaptive for couple functioning among immigrants and—to the extent to which gender-typed attributes are malleable—supporting spouses’ development of skills that have been linked to androgynous personality traits may serve as a point of intervention for practitioners. Individual scores on the BSRI tend to be moderately stable across time. Hyde, Krajinik, and Skuldt-Niederberger (1991) demonstrated that across a 10 year period 54% of individuals remained in the same BSRI category. However, it has

been demonstrated that clinical interventions such as behavioral marital therapy (BMT; e.g., Baucom & Aiken, 1984), can impact husbands' and wives' masculinity. Perhaps interventions, such as BMT, could be adapted for use with immigrant couples who are facing marital challenges to support spouses in the development or maintenance of behaviors that are typically associated with both feminine and masculine personality qualities. Our finding showing that mismatched couples (androgynous wives married to undifferentiated husbands) were equally satisfied as androgynous couples suggests that there may be something specific about having an androgynous wife that buffers both spouses' marital satisfaction. Accordingly, interventions that specifically address the importance of supporting immigrant wives in their efforts to engage in behaviors that reflect both masculine (e.g., self-reliance, assertiveness) and feminine (e.g., sensitive to needs of others, nurturing) characteristics may be protective for the marital dyad during the process of immigration. Further research is needed, however, to directly address the potential benefits of specific BMT interventions with immigrant couples. The results of the current study represent only a first step; to become truly useful in clinical practice, additional intervention-based studies and basic research with behavioral assessments are warranted.

Limitations and Strengths

Although the BSRI is a valid cross-cultural measurement for discriminating between the sexes and has been used with Latino populations (e.g., Kranau et al., 1982; Kulis et al., 2010), some scholars have noted that it “may be somewhat limited in identifying masculine and feminine traits in Mexican culture” (Lara-Cantu & Navarro-Arias, 1986; Reed-Sanders, Dodder, & Webster, 1985, p. 524). Consistent with the findings of Reed-Sanders et al., (1985) there was a notable percentage of undifferentiated individuals in the current study. Replication of the current study with the PAQ (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975) may be useful. Or in accordance with recommendations by Lara-Cantu and Navarro-Arias (1986), an expansion of the BSRI to include four categories, demonstrating positive and negative aspects of both masculinity and femininity, may be merited with Latino samples. Generalizations to Latinos and immigrants more broadly should be made with caution considering the modest sample size and that couples in the current study represent a unique group of Latino immigrants in an emerging immigrant community in North Carolina. LPA is sample-dependent, and small sample sizes can contribute to a sparseness of the contingency table that may limit identification (Lanza et al., 2013). It is possible that the inclusion of more families would have increased the number and type of latent profiles identified and, consequently, future studies with much larger samples may identify different typologies of couples based on their gender-typed attributes. Although a larger number of couples may have increased the number of profiles identified, it is important to note that the number of indicators, the effect size, and the evaluative criteria one uses (AIC, BIC, and BLRT) are *more important* factors than is sample size in determining profiles (Tein et al., 2013). The sample size in the current study was, therefore, sufficient for LPA overall, but likely limited the number of classes that could be identified.

There were several strengths of the current study. Incorporating a sample of Mexican immigrant couples serves to expand the research on the links between spouses' personal attributes and marital satisfaction beyond primarily White and middle-class samples, upon which previous theorizing has been based. Given the unique socioecological niches Mexican immigrant couples often inhabit—contexts that place demands on spouses that are often gendered and culturally

bound, it is imperative to consider various economic and cultural contexts in generating comprehensive theories on the links between gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction that are applicable beyond the White and middle-class (Helms, 2013; Helms et al., 2011). Furthermore, this study incorporated a pattern-analytic approach that challenged stereotypical assertions about the gendered nature of Mexican-origin couples. Neither the men nor the women in this study conformed to the stereotypic and highly gender-typed machismo and marianismo image. The pattern-analytic approach constitutes an additional strength of this study in that it aligns with dyadic theoretical underpinnings linking spouses' gender-typed attributes to their marital quality that have been proposed but rarely tested.

Future Directions

A pertinent area for future study should include the examination of process-oriented mechanisms through which gender-typed attributes might affect marital satisfaction, such as emotion work. For example, in her research on emotion work, Erickson (2005) noted that for women both masculinity and femininity were linked with engaging in emotion work, but only femininity was linked with emotion work for men. Erickson (1993) also found that engaging in emotion work was linked with marital quality. Process or behavioral mechanisms, such as emotion work, may help to clarify how and why gender-typed attributes are linked with marital satisfaction. Previous research has suggested that femininity and masculinity may play specific roles in maritally distressed couples as well. For example, Baucom and Aiken (1984) noted that masculinity was associated with marital stability in maritally distressed couples, whereas femininity was associated with marital satisfaction. Future research may also benefit from including longitudinal measures of relationship satisfaction as well as acculturative stress and negative dimensions of marital behavior such as marital conflict and hostility that may be particularly salient for low-income Mexican-origin couples who are dealing with a host of socioeconomic and cultural stressors. Examined together in a contextualized process model, these factors may illustrate *how* androgyny in couples can be adaptive in stressful contexts.

Future research might also benefit from replications examining configurations of couples based on geographical location and generational status. In other words, future replications may elucidate additional profiles of couples in samples that include couples living in Mexico or later-generation Mexican Americans residing in the U.S. Comparing Mexican immigrant couples with those still living in Mexico might clarify if there are specific configurations of gender-typed attributes that are systematically selected for by those who chose to migrate versus those who do not. This would help determine if there are specific personality traits, gendered or otherwise, that are selected by the process of migration and may help answer remaining questions about the gendered nature of Mexican couples. For example, prior work utilizing a comparative design (e.g., Parrado & Flippen, 2005) examined gendered processes of migration across sending communities in Mexico and immigrant destinations in the U.S. Future studies in Mexico may reveal profiles of gender-typed couples that were not evident in the current sample as well as potentially different links with marital satisfaction.

Conclusion

In summary, the findings from this study further highlight the existence of within-group diversity among Mexican immigrant couples as well as offer support for the link between spouses' gender-typed attributes and marital satisfaction. Our findings underscore the need to study these concepts utilizing dyadic and pattern-analytic approaches in diverse samples. Furthermore, the current study provides an empirical basis for examining process mechanisms and behavioral strategies that may further explain the links between gendered personal qualities and marital satisfaction in Mexican immigrant couples. Finally, our findings linking spouses' androgynous gender-typed attributes to marital satisfaction have implications for future intervention research related to practices that support spouses in the maintenance and development of behavioral strategies that have been previously linked with androgyny.

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